

What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing a primitive for potential display as a part of a graphical image on a display device, the primitive having associated attribute  
5 data and positional data, the method comprising:  
assembling the primitive as a function of the positional data;  
determining if the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the  
graphical image on the display device; and  
causing at least a portion of the attribute data to be received by a graphics  
10 processor as a function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in  
the graphical image on the display device.
2. The method as defined by claim 1 wherein causing comprises causing at  
least a portion of the attribute data to be received by the graphics processor if the  
15 primitive is not determined to be incapable of being viewable in the graphical  
image on the display device.
3. The method as defined by claim 1 wherein the attribute data is not  
received by the graphics processor if the primitive is determined to be incapable  
20 of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.
4. The method as defined by claim 1 wherein determining includes  
performing culling operations to the assembled primitive.
- 25 5. The method as defined by claim 1 further comprising storing the attribute  
data in memory that is external to the graphics processor, causing including  
causing the attribute data to be forwarded from the memory to the graphics

processor as a function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

6. The method as defined by claim 1 wherein assembling includes  
5 forwarding a pointer to the graphics processor, the pointer pointing to memory capable of storing the positional data.

7. The method as defined by claim 1 wherein the graphics processor rasterizes the assembled primitive if it receives the attribute data.

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8. An apparatus for processing a primitive for potential display as a part of a graphical image on a display device, the primitive having associated attribute data and positional data, the apparatus cooperating with a graphics processor input, the apparatus comprising:

15 an assembler capable of assembling the primitive as a function of the positional data;

a primitive pre-processor operatively coupled with the assembler, the primitive pre-processor capable of determining if the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device; and

20 a receiving module operatively coupled with the primitive pre-processor, the receiving module capable of causing the attribute data to be received by the graphics processor input as a function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

25 9. The apparatus as defined by claim 8 wherein receiving module is capable of causing at least a portion of the attribute data to be received by the graphics processor input if the primitive is not determined to be incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

10. The apparatus as defined by claim 8 wherein the receiving module does not cause the attribute data to be received by the graphics processor input if the primitive is determined to be incapable of being viewable in the graphical image  
5 on the display device.

11. The apparatus as defined by claim 8 wherein primitive pre-processor includes a culling module.

10 12. The apparatus as defined by claim 8 further comprising memory for storing the attribute data, the memory being external to the graphics processor, the receiving module being capable of causing the attribute data to be forwarded from the memory to the graphics processor input as a function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display  
15 device.

13. The apparatus as defined by claim 8 wherein the assembler obtains the positional data by receiving a pointer pointing to memory having the positional data.

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14. A computer program product for use on a computer system for processing a primitive for potential display as a part of a graphical image on a display device, the primitive having associated attribute data and positional data, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having  
25 computer readable program code thereon, the computer readable program code comprising

program code for determining if the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device; and

program code for causing at least a portion of the attribute data to be forwarded to a graphics processor as a function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

5    15.    The computer program product as defined by claim 14 wherein the program code for determining includes program code for assembling the primitive as a function of the positional data.

10    16.    The computer program product as defined by claim 14 wherein the program code for causing comprises program code for causing at least a portion of the attribute data to be received by the graphics processor if the primitive is not determined to be incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

15    17.    The computer program product as defined by claim 14 wherein the attribute data is not received by the graphics processor if the primitive is determined to be incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

20    18.    The computer program product as defined by claim 14 wherein the program code for determining includes program code for culling the assembled primitive.

25    19.    The computer program product as defined by claim 14 further comprising program code for storing the attribute data in memory that is external to the graphics processor, the program code for causing including program code for forwarding the attribute data from the memory to the graphics processor as a

function of whether the primitive is incapable of being viewable in the graphical image on the display device.

20. The computer program product as defined by claim 14 wherein the  
5 program code for assembling includes program code for forwarding a pointer to the graphics processor, the pointer pointing to memory capable of storing the positional data.